

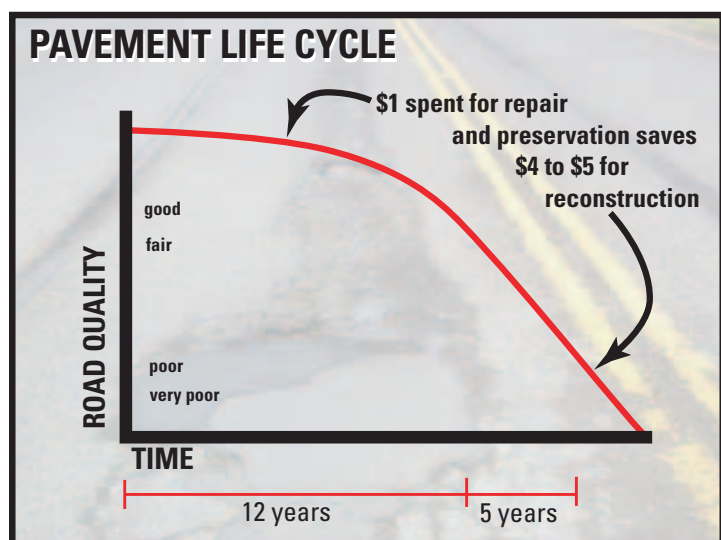


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Take a CLOSER Look

Timely Action Needed to Save Our Streets



Our transportation system is so fundamental to modern life that we may take it for granted. But take a closer look at Eugene's streets and you'll see some serious problems. Rough pavement, cracks and potholes are signs that Eugene's streets are aging and in need of care. Fortunately, there are excellent treatments for preserving streets. But they cost money, and that's a big problem.

Right now, the backlog of preservation projects — slurry seals, overlays, reconstructions — is almost \$70 million. And that figure is estimated to grow to more than \$230 million over the next 10 years unless we can find locally controlled sources of revenue to tackle the backlog.

Locally controlled sources of revenue are important because the primary source of Eugene's road fund revenue — the City's share of state gas tax receipts — has not kept pace with Eugene's street preservation needs. As a result, the backlog continues to grow, and even funding for basic maintenance is in jeopardy.

To deal with this problem, two local revenue options are being considered: a small local fuel tax, and a modest monthly transportation system maintenance fee (see page 3 for more details). Additionally, the City Council recently approved a policy that allows a portion of the fees paid by developers to be used for road repairs. This is a relatively small amount, but it's a step in the right direction. Together, these new sources of locally controlled revenue could bring the backlog problem under control and help preserve Eugene's most valuable physical asset.

'Top 10' Projects for Road Repair

Here is a list of projects proposed be done in the first year if additional road funds are available:

- Echo Hollow from Dove to Royal
- Gilham from Beltline to Cal Young
- 18th Avenue from Bailey Hill to Peppertree
- 30th Avenue from Agate to Hilyard
- Hilyard from 13th to 18th avenues
- Garfield from Roosevelt to 6th Avenue
- Blair Boulevard from 2nd to 5th avenues and Van Buren from 1st to Blair
- Bertelsen from railroad tracks to West 11th
- High Street from 11th to 17th
- 28th Avenue from Chambers to Friendly

For an updated report on construction projects in the Eugene area:

Construction Hotline

www.ci.eugene.or.us/pw/traffic

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It's Easy to Get Involved and Learn More

The Eugene City Council has held several work sessions on the need to preserve Eugene's streets. Another work session is scheduled on July 8, and a public hearing on proposed solutions is tentatively scheduled for Monday, July 22. Here's how you can learn more and voice your opinions.

- **Open-house meeting** on Tuesday, July 9, from 4 to 8 p.m., at the Public Works yard, 1820 Roosevelt. Drop by, ask questions of experts, and let us know what you think.
- **On television**, a short video runs regularly on Metro TV (check your cable guide for station number), with a special broadcast at 9 p.m. Saturday, June 29. Metro TV also televises City Council meetings.

Check the Metro TV schedule at www.metrotv.org.

- **On the internet** at www.ci.eugene.or.us/pw/streets. Reports, fact sheets and other key pieces of information can be viewed or downloaded.
- **Presentations** by representatives from Eugene Public Works. To schedule a presentation, contact Eric Jones, Public Affairs Manager, at 682-5523 or e-mail him at eric.r.jones@ci.eugene.or.us. You can also get current traffic reports on local road construction projects from the City of Eugene traffic relief hotline. Call 984-8484, or visit the internet at www.ci.eugene.or.us/pw/traffic.

We All Benefit from Well-Maintained Streets

Safe. Smooth. Quiet. We know what it feels like to drive on streets that are in good repair. But the truth is, many of Eugene's streets no longer fit into this category. And that's a problem, because we all benefit from well-maintained streets.

Whether we walk, drive, or ride a bicycle, we depend on our transportation system to travel to and from work and school, buy groceries, visit friends and family, go to the park, keep doctor appointments, and countless other things. Food, mail, medicine and a host of other goods and services come to us via the road system, either delivered directly to our homes or to stores and offices.

Safety is the biggest concern in maintaining our street system. We rely on streets and sidewalks that are safe and free of ruts, potholes, and tripping hazards.

A smooth ride is not only comfortable but it saves wear and tear on our vehicles. In fact, it's estimated that each of us here in the Eugene-Springfield area pays more than \$300 a year in increased vehicle maintenance costs because our streets aren't in the best repair.

A well-maintained street looks better and sounds better, too. Because most of us live next to a street, these are important considerations, particularly since they can affect both our livability and our property values.

There are important economic values in well-maintained streets as well. Once a street deteriorates to the point that it needs major repairs, it's typically five times costlier to fix it than to do timely maintenance such as an overlay. Then, consider that the replacement value of just the street surfaces in Eugene is estimated at more than \$500 million – a huge community investment. Clearly, preserving this asset makes good sense and saves money in the long run.

Think about the ways you use Eugene's street system. Take a closer look and see if you don't agree that we all benefit from well-maintained streets.



Learn more about Eugene's street repair backlog problem and ideas being considered to address the problem at an open house on Tuesday, July 9, from 4 to 8 p.m. at the Public Works yard conference room, 1820 Roosevelt Boulevard.



Take a **CLOSER** Look



Well-maintained pavement and sidewalks, plus bike lanes, signals, lights and other design features allow all modes of transportation to flow safely and comfortably through this intersection on Barger. Engineered curbs and gutters and a subsurface drainage system keep water away from the road bed and ensure that the road will last for many years with a minimal amount of ongoing maintenance.



Cracks are very damaging to pavement because they allow water to penetrate into the road bed. **Crack-sealing** helps extend the life of pavement, particularly when cracks are small.

Alligator cracking occurs when cracks spread and become interconnected. This is a sign of advanced street damage, and a full overlay is usually required once the road deteriorates to this point.

Potholes are the final stage of pavement deterioration. Deep potholes are filled for safety reasons, but this is a temporary fix because the patching material quickly deteriorates. Typically, a street must be reconstructed once potholes appear.

Take a Closer Look at Local Revenue Ideas

In the course of a year-long study of the community’s need to preserve the transportation system and tackle the growing backlog of street repair projects, the citizen members of the Eugene Budget Committee considered more than a dozen ideas for raising money to pay for street repairs. These ideas ranged from property taxes and bond measures to sales taxes and tolls. In considering each idea, the members of the committee took into account a variety of legal, financial and political factors, including the need to raise enough annual revenue to keep our existing streets from falling into further disrepair and make meaningful progress on reducing the backlog problem. In the end, the committee recommended two locally controlled revenue options.

“Significant additional funding from one or more new, City-controlled revenue sources is needed in the near future...to preserve our investment in transportation system infrastructure.”

Citizen members of the Eugene Budget Committee

Local Fuel Tax

A local gas tax adds balance and fairness to the overall funding solution. Those who have the most to gain from well-maintained streets — drivers — pay a share of the cost of preserving streets based on how much they drive. A local fuel tax also ensures that non-residents help pay to maintain the streets they use when they visit.

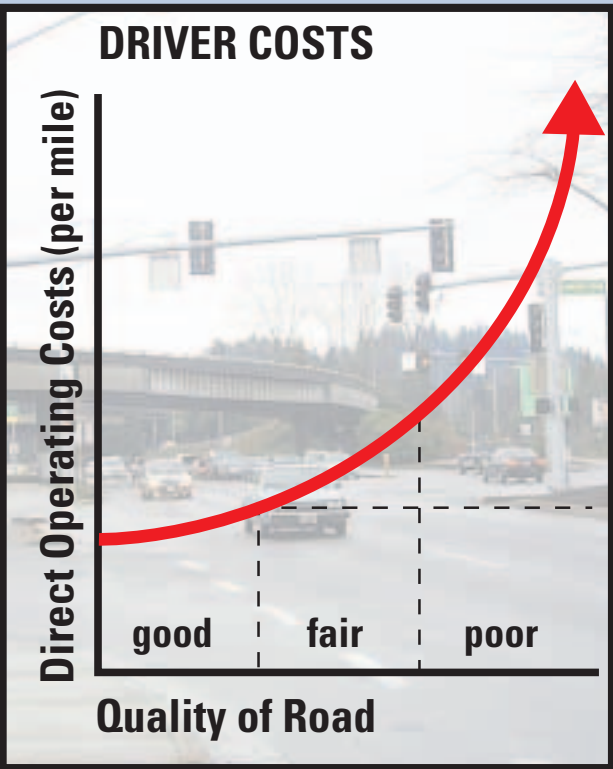
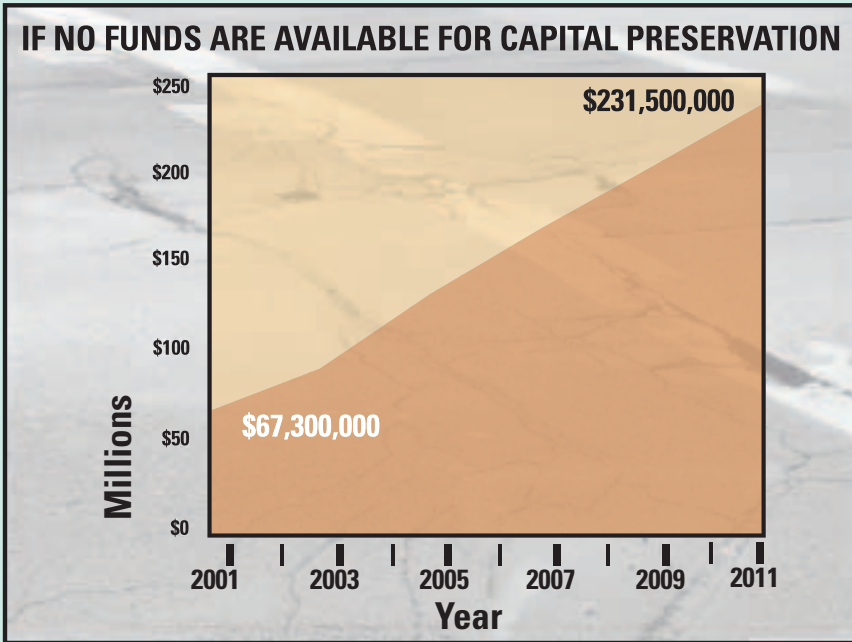
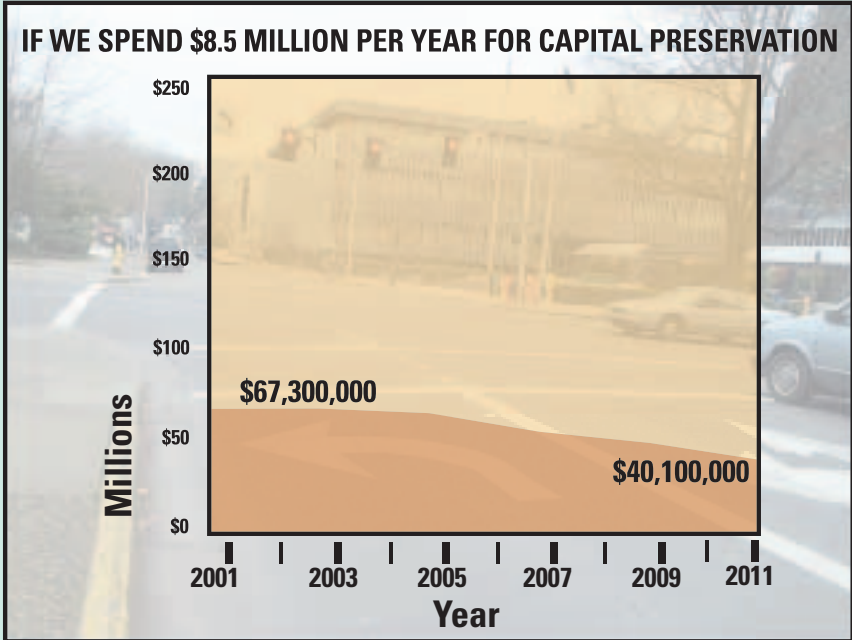
It’s estimated that every penny of local gas tax would generate about \$650,000 a year for the City of Eugene, and discussions so far have been in the range of 2 cents to 5 cents per gallon. Springfield is also looking at a similar local fuel tax to help ensure there’s a level playing field in terms of gas taxes in the metro area.

Transportation System Maintenance Fee

A key concept of the transportation system maintenance fee is that everyone benefits, so everyone pays at least part of the cost of preserving the transportation system. The monthly fee would be collected on monthly utility bills, much like the existing wastewater and stormwater fees. The funds that are generated from the fee can be dedicated to specific transportation uses, although not necessarily limited only to work in the right of way like gas taxes are. This means, for example, that funds from the monthly fee could be used to repair Eugene’s 30 miles of off-street bike paths which are not eligible for gas tax funding.

The actual rates are based on land-use categories, so for example, commercial businesses that generate large volumes of traffic would pay more than a single-family home. In terms of impact, discussions so far have been in the range of a monthly fee of \$3 to \$4 for a typical household to generate funds to tackle the backlog problem.

Two Backlog Scenerios



Drivers Pay Plenty for Poorly Maintained Streets

It’s more expensive to drive on poor-quality streets than it is to fund ongoing road maintenance, according to several recent studies.

Tire wear, steering alignment problems, cracked windshields, increased incidence of accidents, subsequent insurance hikes, and other driving costs can be directly attributed to deteriorated roadways. And the worse the condition of the roads, the higher the operating costs for drivers, according to a study by the Federal Highway Administration.

Drivers save money when streets are kept in good condition. In a March 2002 study, The Road Information Program, a Washington, D.C. research group, estimated that Eugene drivers pay an extra \$320 a year in operating costs due to the condition of local streets.

Preserving Eugene’s streets can help motorists avoid car repairs and preserve the investment in our local transportation system.



Did you know...

Nine Oregon cities already have monthly street repair fees. The cities are LaGrande, Ashland, Tualatin, Eagle Point, Medford, Phoenix, Wilsonville, Talent, and Hubbard.

In addition to the state, six jurisdictions in Oregon currently collect local gasoline taxes. They are: Multnomah County, Washington County, Woodburn, Tillamook, The Dalles, and Pendleton

Take the pothole quiz!

True or False?

1. Property taxes are used to pay for road maintenance in Eugene.
2. The City of Eugene owns and maintains more than 500 miles of streets.
3. Street maintenance funds are used to pay for building new roads.
4. Oregon's gas tax is the highest in the United States.
5. It's more cost effective to fix small cracks than large potholes.
6. The best way to bring the backlog problem under control is to fix the worst streets first.

True or False Answers:

1. False. Funding to maintain Eugene's transportation system comes primarily from the city's share of the state gas tax. The gas tax hasn't increased since 1993 and is projected to continue to decline in real dollars due to inflation and improvements in vehicle fuel efficiency. Eugene's road fund also receives an annual payment through the County/City Road Partnership Agreement. However, those payments have declined in recent years, and there's no certainty they will continue in the future.

2. True. Eugene's transportation system includes approximately 77 miles of arterial streets, 63 miles of major and minor collector streets, 345 miles of local or neighborhood streets, and 30 miles of off-street bike paths.

3. False. The cost of building new streets or bringing unimproved streets up to city standards comes primarily from assessments to abutting property owners and from transportation system development charges (SDCs), which are fees paid when property is developed. SDCs pay for constructing infrastructure needed to support growth in the community and to recoup a portion of the community's investment in the infrastructure already in place. These special funds are kept separate from the road funds used to operate and maintain our transportation system.

4. False. Nationally, Oregon's 24¢ per gallon gas tax ranks 10th among the 50 states and compares to a national average state gas tax of about 20¢/gallon. Oregon's gas tax is the fifth lowest among the seven western states. In a comparison of all auto-related taxes among the seven western states, Oregon ranks last, with an equivalent of 27.1¢ per gallon as compared to cost-per-gallon equivalents of 64.9¢ in Washington, 73¢ in California, 52¢ per gallon in Idaho, 75.9¢ in Nevada, 50¢ in Montana, and 68.4¢ in Utah.

5. True. When small cracks are filled, typically with tar or asphalt mixes, water is prevented from further eroding the pavement, and the life of the street is significantly extended. By the time potholes appear, the surrounding paving and subsurface are so deteriorated that patching materials won't properly adhere or withstand traffic loads, and the patches quickly fail.

6. False. The worst streets in Eugene (not counting unimproved streets) have already fallen into the reconstruction category. This means they have to be dug up and rebuilt, so further deterioration doesn't necessarily add more cost to repairs although it certainly is a continuing problem for motorists and bicylists. By contrast, streets that are just beginning to deteriorate can be preserved through overlays or slurry seals at a fraction of the cost of reconstruction. In the long run, it's just as important to preserve streets in relatively good condition as it is to reconstruct those streets that have already fallen apart.



Did you know...

More than half of Eugene's arterial and collector streets are over 15 years old. Once streets reach this age, they need preservation treatments like overlays or they will quickly deteriorate and require much more expensive treatments in just a few years.

Street Maintenance Glossary



Improved street— Structurally engineered streets, with curbs and gutters, engineered road beds, and other features designed to withstand the effects of traffic and weather. About 90% of Eugene's streets are improved.

Unimproved street — Gravel roads, asphalt mats, unpaved alleys, and other streets that are not engineered or constructed to city standards. These types of street aren't designed to hold up to traffic or weather, and repairs quickly fall apart. Once adjacent property owners agree to improve their street, the city takes on the long-term maintenance responsibility.

Crack sealing— Injection of hot tar or asphalt into cracks and paving seams.

Slurry seal— Very thin layer of liquid asphalt and sand used to seal street surfaces.

Overlay— A new layer of asphalt or concrete, which adds structural strength and seals the surface.

Rehabilitation— Surface repairs to streets. Examples include slurry seals and overlays.

Reconstruction— Extensive street repair work that involves excavating the existing street and rebuilding road bed and surface layers. At least four to five times more costly than rehabilitation.



Take a
CLOSER
Look